

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RONALD J. TENPAS  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

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*Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700*

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***For Immediate Release***

**FEBRUARY 3, 2005**

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on January 4, 2005, **MARIA ANN WINCHESTER**, age 30, of Pocahontas, Illinois, was charged in a one count Indictment returned by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton, Illinois.

Count 1 charged that on or about April 25, 2004, in Jefferson County, WINCHESTER did knowingly and intentionally obtain and acquire Hydrocodone, a Schedule III controlled substance, by misrepresentation, fraud, forgery, deception, or subterfuge, to wit, using the false name of Sarah Carr to obtain a fraudulent controlled substance prescription for Hydrocodone, all in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 843(a)(3).

WINCHESTER faces a penalty of up to 4 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury. The case is set for trial on March 21, 2005, in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois.

The investigation in this case was a cooperative effort between the Joint Narcotics Unit of the Mt. Vernon Police Department and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies pursuant to their participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. In addition, the Jefferson County States Attorney's Office has assisted throughout the investigation.

The case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney George Norwood.